



CENTURION CHALLENGE 2018

50 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

100 MILES IN 48 HOURS

16:00 FRIDAY 6TH JULY TO 16:00 SUNDAY 8TH JULY

The challenge

To leave the main doors of Beechen Cliff at 16:00 on Friday the 6th July, follow the specified route to the Kennet & Avon Canal and walk to Devizes on the tow path, camp overnight, then continue to the Parish Church at Hungerford, return to Devizes and on Sunday the 8th of July make your way finally back to Beechen Cliff School by 16:00 to claim to be a Centurion.

Why ?

The Centurion Challenge has been an honourable tradition of Beechen Cliff School. This year the challenge will again raise money for charitable causes. We have raised money for The Bath Cancer Support Group, Wellboring a charity that aims to supply fresh drinking water to sub-Saharan African Countries, and Ethiopiaid. We also raise money to help support pupils in participating in the activities at Beechen Cliff School including to help fund this event. This year we are raising money for MentoringPlus, a mental health charity and The Tir Y Cwn Trust, an organisation separate from the school that runs our adventurous activity centre in the Brecon Beacons. The centre is some 1.5 km from the nearest village and mains power supply so it is intended this year to develop a Solar Energy storage system to replace our reliance on diesel generators. In addition we also donate monies to the Canals and River Trust and St Lawrence Church, Hungerford as a thank you to the Rev. Mike Saunders for his support and the encouragement he gives to the boys as they reach the halfway point.

The Centurion Campsite

The Centurion Campsite is a hub of intensive activity. It is assembled on the Thursday and Friday in readiness for the Challengers to arrive on the Friday evening after walking 22 miles. They feast on a BBQ and are quickly put to bed as they need to be awake by 05:00 Hours to prepare themselves for the 56 miles they will cover the next day. Staff are required to be up by 04:30 Hours to assist in preparing breakfast and the food / water logistics for the day. The Challengers leave at 06:00 Hours and will not return until 21:00 Hours after a gruelling day, most arrive back between 22:00 – 23:00 Hours. This year some Challengers suffered from mild heat exhaustion as well as the traditional foot related injuries after walking such vast distances in the conditions. Parental and support from the greater school community throughout the event

is essential. They marshal the 32 check points and help collect the 'fallen' returning them to the campsite or to their homes. Without this we could not undertake such an event. You may well have seen this yourself.

On the Sunday morning before the restart we run a foot clinic that repairs the damage caused in the last two days enabling the Challengers to continue; this has to start before 05:00 Hours as few Challengers are untouched by the event... as part of the 'rules' Challengers are allowed to restart tier walking where we stopped them the night before as we don't allow walking on the canal tow path after 23:00 Hours. This requires transporting them back to this point so they can restart at 06:00 Hours. Hence the buses have to leave by 05:30 to enable this to happen. There are 3 buses that depart for the 3 collection points from the night before. Finally the Centurion Campsite has to be disassembled. It takes 2 days to build it but it's gone by midday on the Sunday.

The event is recorded by us, parents and the Challengers. The experience is fully documented. There is an imprint left on the Challengers that will last throughout their lives. Those who have succeeded and those who have yet to, will remember this time. Some will come back again to test themselves, others will not. Their acceptance of the challenge is recognised by the whole school. We continue to have boys from Year 7 who wish to attempt the challenge, that's boys just 11 years old. Some actually complete the challenge in full, others will gain valuable experience and return in later years. Where these young boys have walked others will be encouraged to follow. This speaks 'volumes' for the youth of today, but this is often lost or not seen by the community beyond the school.

*Richard Stewart
Centurion Challenge Organiser*